*I Stand Here Ironing* questions

1. What regrets does the mother have? How does she feel now about the decisions she made in the past?
2. How did the mother's life force her to make decisions she now regrets?
3. What comments is Olsen making in this story about social class and economic issues?
4. Where does Emily get her gift for comedy?
5. The narrator says, "There were all the acts of love." What were her acts of love?
6. To whom is this story addressed? Why did Tillie Olsen choose this point of view?
7. What specific details does the narrator give to make us feel Emily's suffering?
8. Why don't Emily and Susan get along?
9. The narrator says of Emily, "Now suddenly she was Somebody, as imprisoned in her difference as she had been in her anonymity." What does she mean?
10. Explain the point the narrator makes in the last paragraph of the story.